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OFFICE OF
THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

21 May 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, National Security Agency

SUBJECT : Management and Direction of Overhead Reconnaissance
Activities

1. The Director of Central Intelligence recently asked this staff to examine the arrangements between the Department of Defense and the Central Intelligence Agency regarding the National Reconnaissance Office. In connection with this examination, selected members of the Coordination Staff have received a helpful briefing by members of your agency. We have now arrived at certain tentative conclusions and recommendations which are contained in the attached paper.

2. Before forwarding these conclusions and recommendations to the Director of Central Intelligence, we would appreciate any comments or suggestions that you may have concerning them.

3. I am asking [] of my staff personally to convey this paper to you, in view of its sensitivity. [] is familiar with our views on this problem, and is available for consultation with you or your staff.

SIGNED

[]
Assistant for Coordination

Attachment

NSA, DIA and NRO review(s) completed.

NGA Review Completed.

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ATTACHMENT

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MANAGEMENT AND DIRECTION OF OVERHEAD RECONNAISSANCE ACTIVITIES

1. The memorandum to the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) from the Secretary of Defense dated 6 September 1961 formalized a working arrangement between Defense and CIA which came into being in the early stages of developing a satellite intelligence collection capability. It is clear that this arrangement which placed authority for the conduct of research, development and operations at a high level in each agency, and which recognized the need for coordination of effort and full use of each agency's capabilities, was essential to the success of the initial program. If arrangements of this nature are to be continued, they should be modified in the light of the intelligence experience which has been gained to date with the program.

2. In retrospect, it can be seen that the program has not yet produced the fullest intelligence benefits of which it is capable in the fields of COMINT and ELINT.

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The National Security Agency is specifically charged with responsibility for providing at the national level unified organization and control of COMINT and ELINT resources and activities of the U. S. Government. Thus, because guidance and assistance were not obtained from NSA, the COMINT/ELINT satellite reconnaissance efforts to date have not been as productive as might otherwise have been the case.

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3. Although the memorandum of the Secretary of Defense formalizing NRO states that it will be responsive to, and only to, the photographic and electronic signal collection requirements and priorities as established by the United States Intelligence Board (USIB), it is clear that this responsiveness has been effective only with respect to certain photographic requirements for which the Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance (COMOR) supports USIB.

4. In the COMINT/ELINT field, the existence of many other collection capabilities under the control or subject to the technical direction of the Director, NSA, necessitates careful consideration of the precise contribution which satellite collection can make in

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relation to these other capabilities. For other types of COMINT/ELINT collection, NSA is responsible for determining the most effective use which can be made of each collection capability to meet total requirements, and for tasking the resources involved. A particularly pertinent and important example of NSA's function in this regard is [redacted]

[redacted] This activity if and when completed would possess a unique ELINT collection capability under NSA technical direction which, if employed to complement satellite collection under unified coherent guidance, would ensure maximum benefit from both collection means. In order to obtain maximum advantage and economical use of satellite COMINT/ELINT collection, NSA must exercise its normal responsibilities with respect to this means as it does for all other means of COMINT/ELINT collection. These normal responsibilities include determination of which COMINT/ELINT requirements can best be met by satellite collection and their priority; determining technical feasibility of satellite collection to meet such requirements; planning and programming the research, development and fabrication of the necessary collection packages in conformance with the characteristics of the vehicle; and developing the necessary processing and analysis program.

5. With respect to mapping and geodesy, there are apparently conflicting views among the interested elements of the Department of Defense involving questions as to the most effective techniques and methods to be employed in overhead reconnaissance for these purposes. The memorandum of the Secretary of Defense dated 17 March 1962 placing responsibility in the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) for developing a plan for management of Department of Defense mapping and geodetic activities should result in a resolution of this conflict and place DIA in a position to provide guidance as to the needs and optimum techniques for satellite mapping and geodesy.

6. Means therefore exist for determining requirements and priorities within each of the principal collection functions of satellites. For photographic collection, COMOR is an increasingly effective instrument. In the case of mapping and geodesy, DIA should in the near future be capable of making these determinations. In the COMINT/ELINT field, NSA, with the support of the SIGINT Committee, can accomplish these determinations with respect to satellite collection as it is now accomplishing for all other types of COMINT/ELINT collection.

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7. A major remaining problem is that of furnishing final USIB guidance as to priorities among the various collection functions of a satellite. It would appear that, under Director of Central Intelligence Directive (DCID) 2/7, responsibility for developing and recommending such guidance is assigned to COMOR. It might be argued, however, that COMOR ought not coordinate photographic requirements as such, and additionally be responsible for developing and recommending priorities among its own photographic requirements, and other requirements (SIGINT, mapping and geodesy) for satellite collection. However, in light of COMOR's demonstrated capability in the photographic requirement field, and in view of the functions assigned to the Committee in DCID 2/7, it is considered that for the present this would be the best arrangement. Some alterations in COMOR membership may be required to enable the Committee to discharge this additional responsibility.

8. Considerable difficulty has also been experienced in the past and can be anticipated in the future in the photographic field with respect to the lack of an analytical capability commensurate with the volume of material obtained from overhead reconnaissance. It is therefore essential that organizations responsible for processing the material obtained from overhead reconnaissance be kept apprised of planned and programmed collection activities, in order to make the necessary preparations.

CONCLUSIONS:

9. It is essential that arrangements between Defense and CIA for the overhead reconnaissance program continue for the present to provide for specific authority at a high level in each agency for the operational and policy aspects of the program. Additionally procedures should be established to furnish these authorities on a regular and continuing basis with guidance and advice from the intelligence community as a whole as to intelligence objectives, requirements and priorities; specifically in the field of COMINT/ELINT provision should be made for NSA to furnish guidance and advice consonant with its responsibilities and capabilities. This guidance and advice should encompass both the direction and emphasis to be taken in research and development of overhead reconnaissance techniques and payload capabilities for intelligence purposes, and the employment of existing capabilities for intelligence collection. It is imperative that this intelligence guidance and advice be adhered to in the conduct of the program, unless there are overriding policy and operational considerations.

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10. Procedures to develop and furnish this guidance and advice should make fullest possible use of arrangements and capabilities now existing within the community for providing overall intelligence guidance to collectors and to research and development activities.

11. The sensitivity of satellite reconnaissance operations justifies some degree of special security compartmentation. However, the security compartmentation factor should be exercised on a realistic need-to-know basis which would ensure that those elements of the intelligence community which can contribute productively to research and development, collection or analysis phases of the program, are brought fully into the overall program. Special security compartmentation should not operate to the detriment of the basic purpose for which these operations are conducted, namely, to improve the intelligence product.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

12. Arrangements for Defense/CIA management of the overhead reconnaissance program should be expanded to include provision for the following:

a. Guidance and advice from NSA with respect to research and development and employment of existing capabilities for COMINT/ELINT collection.

b. Guidance and advice from DIA with respect to requirements for research and development and with respect to employment of capabilities for mapping and geodetic collection.

c. Advice and assistance from the National Photographic Interpretation Center (NPIC) with respect to requirements for research and development to increase photographic collection capability.

d. Guidance from COMOR with respect to the employment of photographic collection capabilities.

e. Guidance and advice from USIB (taking into consideration COMOR recommendations) as to overall intelligence priorities for research and development and utilization of overhead reconnaissance capabilities for collection purposes.

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f. Ensuring that organizations responsible for processing and analysis of the products of overhead reconnaissance programs are adequately advised in advance to permit timely preparation for their respective tasks.

13. A detailed proposal for implementation of the above recommendations should be developed in consultation with appropriate representatives of the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence, the Director, NSA, the Director, DIA, and the Undersecretary of the Air Force, for approval by the Director of Central Intelligence and the Secretary of Defense.

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